United Nations
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

49th
PLENARY MEETING

Thursday, 4 November 1993
at 10 a.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY
(Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 16

ELECTIONS TO FILL VACANCIES IN SUBSIDIARY ORGANS AND OTHER ELECTIONS

(d) ELECTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES: NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/568)

The PRESIDENT: By its resolution 45/319 of 21 December 1990, the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General (A/45/890), elected Mrs. Sadako Ogata as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 1991.

By its resolution 47/104 of 16 December 1992, the General Assembly decided to continue the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for a further period of five years from 1 January 1994.

In conformity with established procedure, the Secretary-General proposes to the General Assembly that the term of office of Mrs. Sadako Ogata as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees be extended for a period of five years, beginning on 1 January 1994 and ending on 31 December 1998.

May I consider that the General Assembly approves that proposal, contained in document A/48/568?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I should like on behalf of the entire Assembly sincerely to congratulate Mrs. Sadako Ogata of Japan on the extension of her appointment as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for a period of five years, beginning on 1 January 1994 and ending on 31 December 1998.

We also wish to compliment the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the excellent work it is doing in the area of servicing the needs of refugees.

Mr. HATANO (Japan): On behalf of the Government and the people of Japan, I express my sincere congratulations to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and to Mrs. Sadako Ogata on the occasion of Mrs. Ogata's nomination to a new five-year term as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Since Mrs. Ogata assumed office three years ago the international situation has undergone dramatic change. The eruption of conflicts and civil strife in many parts of the world has resulted in unspeakable human suffering. The problem of refugees has become one of the greatest threats to world peace and stability, and is thus one of the most daunting challenges facing the United Nations. Throughout this difficult time Mrs. Ogata has provided the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with outstanding leadership, and my Government commends her for the excellent work she has done. We extend our best wishes for her future work.

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Section, Room C-178, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

93-87068 (E)

Distr. GENERAL

A/48/PV.49
24 November 1993

ENGLISH

The Government of Japan also pays high tribute to the UNHCR for its efforts to address the refugee problem. I am pleased to reaffirm our continued support for its humanitarian activities.

Mr. ELARABY (Egypt): On behalf of the Government of Egypt, I would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata. Her unanimously approved nomination to a further term of five years is a tribute to the efforts she has been exerting over the past three years. My delegation would like to pay a high tribute to her dedication and total commitment and to the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Of late, conflicts have erupted in various parts of the world. The numbers of refugees have no doubt doubled in the past few years. I think that the whole international community is fortunate to have Mrs. Ogata undertaking her very important tasks.

I would like to reiterate once more the heartfelt congratulations of the Government of Egypt to Mrs. Ogata on her unanimously approved nomination.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 16 (d).

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: I have an announcement to make in connection with agenda item 15 (c), "Election of five members of the International Court of Justice", which the Assembly is scheduled to consider on Wednesday, 10 November.

I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to the relevant documents. First, document A/48/432, dated 27 September 1993, sets out the composition of the Court and the procedure for the election in the General Assembly and in the Security Council. Secondly, document A/48/440, dated 14 October 1993, contains the *curricula vitae* of the candidates. Thirdly, document A//48/433, dated 27 September 1993, contains the list of candidates submitted within the required time for submission. Finally, documents A/48/555 and A/48/555/Add.1, dated 27 October 1993 and 3 November 1993 respectively, contain additional information received after 31 August 1993, the required date for submission.

Paragraph 1 of document A/48/555 contains additional nominations by national groups. Paragraph 2 of the same document indicates that the Tunisian National Committee has withdrawn its nomination of Mr. Mohamed Lejmi. Document A/48/555/Add.1 further indicates that Mr. Bola Ajibola has withdrawn his candidature. Any additional information that may be received will be issued in a further addendum to the document.

In order to facilitate the preparation and conduct of the election procedure, it would seem desirable that the Assembly have before it, as it has had in the past, a consolidated and updated list of candidates. Accordingly, if there is no objection, I shall request the Secretariat to issue a consolidated and updated list of candidates so as to reflect all information received since the issuance of the original list, thus facilitating the election process for all representatives.

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 24

UNITED NATIONS NEW AGENDA FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA IN THE 1990s

(a) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/334, A/48/336 and Corr.1)

(b) NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TRANSMITTING A REPORT BY THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/48/335 and Add.1)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed today at 11 a.m.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I therefore request representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names as soon as possible.

Mr. ELARABY (Egypt) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: I am honoured to speak here today, on behalf of the President of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), on this important new agenda item, which entails a preliminary evaluation of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

The exacerbation of the economic and social problems of Africa was the reason behind adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAARED), which was meant to be fully implemented over the period from 1986 to 1990. In September 1991 a

final review of the progress achieved in that direction showed that the implementation of the Programme had not risen to the level of the international community's expectations, in general, or to that of Africa's aspirations, in particular.

The faltering international effort in facing up to the persistence and aggravation of the problems of African development led the General Assembly to adopt resolution 46/151, by consensus, on 18 December 1991. The resolution, which included the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, was adopted in reaffirmation of the international community's and the African countries' commitment to promote Africa's social and economic development in the course of this decade, within the framework of the concepts and principles of shared responsibility and international partnership. The adoption of that resolution also highlighted the high priority accorded by the United Nations to the question of economic recovery in Africa and to African development in general.

My delegation wishes to commend the three reports submitted by the Secretary-General under item 24 and to make special mention of his efforts aimed at the full implementation of the New Agenda. We hope that the implementation of that Agenda will be stepped up so that, by the end of the century, UN NADAF will have achieved all that UNPAARED failed to achieve in the 1980s.

We welcome the establishment of the Panel of High-level personalities on African development, and call for regular meetings by that consultative body and for the transmittal of its conclusions and recommendations to the Member States.

Egypt also welcomes the establishment, in implementation of the recommendation by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), of a special coordination unit that focuses on Africa and the least developed countries. We call for providing the unit with all the capabilities that would enable it to perform its role in following up the implementation of the New Agenda. We also welcome the establishment of a working group for inter-agency coordination under the chairmanship of the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa.

The United Nations system has a long way to go yet before the new priorities embodied in the New Agenda become concrete realities. In the context of policies and strategies pursued by a variety of agencies and funds throughout the United Nations system, operational activities within the United Nations, as well as those pursued by the specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions, must all be geared towards the establishment of concrete programmes and projects, with the aim of implementing the New Agenda and providing the required financial resources for its proper functioning. In this connection, we stress the importance of the roles performed by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), in strengthening the overall role of the United Nations in the implementation of the New Agenda.

In addition to that major role of the United Nations system, I should like to call to mind the role played by the African States in particular and the international community in general, in the context of the New Agenda commitments which call upon the African countries to continue to intensify their own development efforts. The African countries have spared no effort in shouldering their own responsibility for economic and social development in Africa. Many African States are engaged in implementing major economic and political structural adjustment programmes aimed at democratization and effecting the transition to market economies. Those same States have upheld human rights while strengthening the private sector, paring down public-sector expenditures seeking to ensure human development, and working for the protection of the environment.

Over 30 African countries have committed themselves to carrying out structural-adjustment and economic-transition programmes. This endeavour, however, has generated adverse social effects that hit their peoples very hard and exceeded their ability to contain or mitigate the resultant difficulties on their own. The efforts of the international community thus far have not risen to the level of the commitments outlined in the New Agenda or the aspirations of African countries, notably with regard to the target figure of 4 per cent set out in the New Agenda for aid that should be channelled to Africa.

Africa is the only continent that suffers from declining flows of financial resources in the 1990s. In addition, there is the continued worsening of its external debt burden side by side with plummeting commodity prices, the inability of its products to penetrate the markets of the industrial countries, the inability to diversify those products, the inadequacy of aid provided by the international community in the fight against the epidemic spread of various diseases such as malaria and AIDS as well as the spread of drought, desertification, soil deterioration and the devastation caused by the plague of locusts. All these negative factors combine in seriously hampering the development efforts of African States.

While the international economy moves steadily towards integration and the emergence of international trading blocs, Africa is finding it very difficult to gain access to any of the new groupings that are taking shape in the international economy. The major challenge now facing Africa is the need to achieve rates of economic growth that would qualify it to catch up with the rapid pace of the international economy so that it may become an active part of that economy in the 1990s and thereafter. This will depend in large part on the increase of financial resource flows to Africa, as called for by the New Agenda. Unfortunately, what we have now is the reverse. Those flows have declined from $18 million in 1990 to about $14 million in 1992.

There is also a decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Africa, notably in terms of what the major donors are providing. They are providing only 0.33 per cent of their gross national product instead of the 0.7 per cent target level. This goes hand in hand with the feeble response of foreign capital to the enabling policies which many African countries have pursued with the aim of creating a better climate for foreign investment. This is compounded by the feeble brokerage role played by African banks and insurance companies in mobilizing savings and investment capital. That role is insignificant indeed in comparison with the role played in Asia, for instance, by Asian banks and insurance companies.

Africa's worsening debt problem cannot be addressed in isolation from the need to increase the flows of financial resources to the continent. Africa's growing external debt burden is one of the major obstacles blocking the required increase in direct foreign investment. Consequently, the international community should accord a high priority to addressing that problem in a manner that would make it possible to rechannel the financial resources which are absorbed by debt servicing to financing economic and social development in Africa. The debt problem must be dealt with creatively and boldly. In so doing, we have to come to grips with all the bilateral, multilateral and commercial debt problems faced by the continent.

The delegation of Egypt wishes to highlight the negative effects of deteriorating terms of trade and falling commodity prices on the African countries. The resultant decline in Africa's export earnings has had a deleterious effect on Africa's development efforts. Consequently, we support the suggestion in the relevant report by the Secretary-General to set up a diversification facility for African commodities for an initial period of three to four years, with resources of $US 50-75 million, although the figures suggested seem modest enough, especially that the Amsterdam Fund has not managed to do for Africa as much as was hoped for. However, that Fund may still play a major role in providing financing for this new facility which will not constitute a new bureaucratic structure as we suggest that it should be set up within the framework of the African Development Bank.

We also support the call for African States to set up councils for the diversification of their products at the national level. Representatives of the Governments and the private sectors of those countries should participate in the proposed councils with a view to proposing diversification plans that may be incorporated in the overall diversification programmes.

Having spoken of the problems of trade, commodity prices and diversification, I should like to speak on one of the important issues on the New Agenda, namely that of regional and subregional cooperation and integration in Africa.

Africa has shaped its vision and aspirations in this respect in the Abuja Agreement on the setting up of the African economic community. The realization of that ambition requires a great deal of efforts on the part of the African countries and a great deal of support from the international community especially in the area consolidating the economic and social infrastructures and strengthening the capabilities of the African countries.

Egypt has followed with a great deal of appreciation Japan's initiative to convene an international conference on African development. That initiative was launched in this very Hall in November two years ago, in 1991. On 5 and 6 October 1993, the Conference was held in Tokyo and we consider that the declaration adopted contains a very strong political commitment on the part of Africa, to continue to work for reform and development and on the part of the international community to continue to support Africa's efforts in that direction. We call for follow up on the conclusions of the Tokyo Declaration, the implementation of its recommendations and for further initiatives along the same lines with the participation of as many interested parties as possible.

We are at the threshold of the 21st century. We have but a few years left in which the international community must come to Africa's assistance so that it may fall in step with the other continents in their march toward the new 21st century. All African States, and indeed all the members of the international community are urged not to miss that opportunity.

Egypt, as the Chairman of the current session of the Organization of African Unity, calls upon the members of the international community and upon international financial institutions, to set up their support for the

development of Africa for the few remaining years of the 1990s and urges them all to meet their commitments made in the context of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, both in spirit and letter.

I wish to conclude my statement by underscoring the fruitful ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. That cooperation gives concrete form to the partnership we are calling for between regional and subregional organizations in implementing the New Agenda. The African group is now engaged in drafting a resolution on this important item that will be put before the General Assembly at a later date, at which time we hope it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: It is an honour for me to participate in this meeting of the General Assembly, on behalf of the 130 countries members of the Group of 77 and the People's Republic of China, to discuss an issue of great importance to the third world, namely, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

The deepening economic and social crisis in Africa led the General Assembly to adopt the New Agenda by consensus in December 1990. The United Nations recognized the need to give the subject of Africa a pre-eminent place among its priorities for the decade. It recognized the urgent need to create new mechanisms and give new directions to secure the international support needed to deal with the dramatic situation facing that continent. At the time it was expected that the New Agenda for Africa would serve as a political catalyst to encourage greater support among the international community.

This session of the General Assembly affords us a valuable occasion to draw the world's attention once again to the critical economic and social situation which the vast majority of African countries continue to face. The circumstances that prompted the adoption of the New Agenda continue to exist. If the persistent trends in that region are not reversed, any prospect for the rehabilitation and development of its peoples will be out of the question. On the contrary, the world will continue to witness privation, hunger and war, with all their painful consequences.

The economic and social conditions of the majority of African countries have worsened in recent years. Their heavy debt burden, their excessive dependence on a few commodities, the rapid population growth, the serious deterioration of nutrition indices, the environmental deterioration caused by recurring problems of drought and desertification, the political instability and explosive internal confrontations are only a sampling of the prevailing chronic situation and the serious repercussions created by the increasing marginalization of those countries in the world economy. That sombre picture is even more alarming in sub-Saharan Africa. There, poverty and human suffering have reached dimensions unknown in any other part of the world.

It has been established that the number of malnourished people in Africa could reach 250 million by the year 2000, that is, a figure equivalent to 30 per cent of the population projected for that region by that year. Even if the 6 per cent average annual economic-growth target set by the Agenda for Africa were achieved, 25 years would still be needed to reach an acceptable level of unemployment.

Against this dramatic and complex situation the African countries are taking their own action to implement the commitments embodied in the New Agenda. Policies of economic reforms, the promotion of subregional and regional cooperation, the quest for democratic processes, agricultural development and the establishment of suitable environmental and demographic policies are but a few examples of the challenges with which those countries are grappling. The international community, however, has no less a responsibility.

The heavy and unbearable external debt burden of African countries has led to a paradoxical situation in which those same countries have become net exporters of capital to developed countries and multilateral financial institutions. In other words, the world's poorest countries are transferring their scarce resources to finance the development of the richest countries. The total value of production of the African economies would barely be enough to cover the amount of their indebtedness. In the sub-Saharan countries not even three years' worth of exports would cover the amount of their debt. That situation has been aggravated by the tangible drop in commodity prices and insufficient investment flows that have further affected the capacity of those countries to meet their financial obligations and to go forward with their development programmes. Vast sectors of the African population continue to be deprived of a large volume of resources that could otherwise be channelled to meeting their urgent social needs. The definitive solution to Africa's debt problem should be an urgent priority in the agenda of the international community for that region.

The transformation and diversification of the African economies constitute an indispensable condition for their effective integration into the world economy, for reducing their vulnerability and for launching a self-sustained process of growth. In turn, the diversified economic

development of Africa constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for achieving a durable solution to its social problems and internal conflicts and for achieving a real and stable peace in that region. The Secretary-General has submitted to this session a study on the need for and feasibility of the establishment of a diversification fund for African commodities. Unfortunately, the late submission of the document may affect its discussion. We hope, however, that the recommendations contained in the study will be given extensive and serious consideration by the General Assembly.

Another area in which the African continent must be supported by the international community is regional and subregional integration. The African countries must join efforts to improve their own competitiveness in an age like our own, with its enlarged markets and increasing globalization. The majority of the African economies are small in size. Their infrastructure and production facilities should be shared in order to achieve greater competitiveness. Regional cooperation efforts and the strengthening of institutional capacity in this area must involve the United Nations system, the Economic Commission for Africa and the development banks.

Full implementation of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa and adoption of the necessary measures by the international community - in particular, by the developed countries, the United Nations and the multilateral financial and development institutions - are indispensable if the agreed strategies are to be given a decisive impetus. There should be constant follow-up to, and assessment of, the various instruments that have been agreed upon. An early review is necessary to ensure that all the envisaged institutional machinery is functioning adequately and that the requested financial resources have indeed been allocated as scheduled and in the amounts required.

Africa is a continent of enormous potential. Its diversity, wealth and human resources offer a glimmer of hope. We must reaffirm our confidence in the peoples of Africa and help them to build their own future. The international community must share this responsibility through tangible commitments and specific measures. The immense political significance of this undertaking should be expressed in the form of a clear resolve on the part of the General Assembly and its reaffirmation that in the years to come such problems be the central focus of attention of the main multilateral forums. The full solidarity of the United Nations is a fundamental need if the peoples of Africa will see hope reborn.

Mr. LAMAMRA (Algeria) *(interpretation from French)*: I should like first to thank the Secretary-General for his excellent report on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. The useful and relevant information that it contains makes a valuable contribution by setting the stage for our current deliberations, as do the statements that have just been made by the representative of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and by the Chairman of the Group of 77, whose views the Algerian delegation completely supports.

The inclusion of the economic recovery and development of Africa as one of the five major priorities set out in the medium-term plan of the United Nations and the adoption of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s mark a new beginning. Following a decade of dishonoured promises and clear-cut failures, and taking account of the lessons learned from the disappointing results of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (UNPAAERD), the New Agenda reflects the international community's commitment to the building of a partnership of a new type to promote economic growth and lay the foundations for the continent's lasting development.

Based on an objective evaluation of the factors underlying the failure of UNPAAERD, the New Agenda is meant to be an unprecedented starting point in international cooperation for development by defining - this time very clearly - the shared, but differing, responsibilities and commitments of the African countries themselves and the international community, within the framework of the common endeavour to revitalize the African economies.

Anxious to be involved in the process of transition under way in the world, and aware that all development strategies must, above all, be based on self-reliance, and that the support of the international community, however important, cannot be regarded as indispensable, the African countries have undertaken to embark on a bold programme of political and economic reforms, often at extremely high social cost.

At the political level, efforts have been made to promote an orderly and steady transition to more democratic forms of government, a greater degree of mass participation and upgrading of human resources. At the continental level, the recent establishment of machinery for the prevention and management of conflicts arises from the will of the peoples of Africa to eradicate sources of tension and conflict, which are particularly detrimental to the continent's economic recovery.

On the economic front, profound transformations have been made for the purpose of promoting growth and lasting development. Ambitious but painful structural adjustment programmes have been initiated, primarily through the establishment of frameworks for macroeconomic regulation, with a view to encouraging the revival of growth and the promotion of investment and employment. Various measures designed to restore economic equilibrium and financial stability have already produced results in the shape of a reduction in the budget deficit, which dropped from 12 per cent of gross national product in 1987 to 5 per cent in 1991. This trend continued in 1992, in spite of the diversion of a considerable portion of internal resources to the servicing of external debt.

At the same time, Africa has been striving to promote regional cooperation and economic integration. The Treaty that created the African Economic Community, which was signed in Abuja in June 1991, represents a most solemn expression, at the highest level, of the will of the African countries to take control of their own destinies by exploiting the continent's capacities and talents. The Treaty is well on the way to being ratified by sufficient countries to come into force.

It should be pointed out that this continental endeavour is just a continuation of the work begun at the subregional level, where integration machinery has existed in some cases for several decades and in others for just a few years. It is true that the achievements of these instruments of subregional cooperation remain modest, but the dynamic to strengthen their capacity to act has now been unleashed through a review of their statutes with a view to more effective functioning and a better adaptation to the new objectives given them as pillars of the undertaking to bring about continental integration.

Thus many gains have been registered in the Maghreb region since the foundation of the Arab Maghreb Union. A number of sectoral cooperation protocols have been signed, and institutional machinery has been set up and has now come into operation. This has all helped to give the Arab Maghreb Union the status of a partner recognized and valued by the other African regional institutions and by the international organizations.

The Southern African Development Coordination Conference, the preferential trade zone of central and eastern African countries and the Economic Community of West African States are other means of support for Africa in its determination to exploit subregional complementarities as part of the process of building the African Economic Community.

Because they are being made in a particularly unfavourable international economic environment, and because consistent external assistance is lacking, the efforts of the African countries, however praiseworthy, have not in themselves proved sufficient to reduce, or at least mitigate, the multidimensional crisis affecting the continent. In spite of the enormous sacrifices that have been made, the African economy in the first two years of this decade grew at scarcely more than 2 per cent, and per capita income decreased in 1992, as it did every year since the beginning of the 1980s.

The total African debt went up to $288 billion in 1992, which represents an increase of 2.5 per cent on average between 1990 and 1992, and 7.7 per cent for the sub-Saharan region alone. Africa, which has the highest ratios of debt to levels both of gross national product and of exports, continues to devote more than 30 per cent of its export earnings to servicing external debt.

The Secretary-General had estimated that a minimum of $30 million in public assistance for development would be necessary in 1992 if the African countries were to achieve and maintain in the 1990s the relative growth of 6 per cent set down as the target by the New Agenda. However, the combined total of net financial resources flowing towards the continent remained below the $20 billion level, and the net transfer of resources, which had in recent years become positive in other developing regions of the world, had a negative record of $1.6 billion in 1992 with regard to Africa.

The stagnation, imbalances and uncertainty characteristic of international trade bring into greater relief the growing marginalization of Africa, which is due not only to the continuing decline in primary commodity prices but also to the restrictions imposed on access to the markets of the countries of the North.

Commodity prices, which represent about 90 per cent of African exports, have indeed experienced an appreciable drop of 4 per cent in 1992 in comparison to 1991, and exports have stagnated. This all has led to a reduction in Africa's share in international trade.

While the African countries have, to a large extent, shouldered an important share of their responsibilities and remain determined to continue and intensify their development efforts, the international community must for its part redouble its efforts to make up for lost time and see to the rapid materialization of its commitments.

Without the substantial contribution of additional financial resources adequate to the tasks at hand, the economic reforms and adjustment programmes under way

will necessarily be longer and more difficult, and ultimately liable to exacerbate even further economic imbalances and dangerously fuel social and political tensions in a number of African countries.

It is the duty of the international community, therefore, to promote innovative and bold action within the framework of a lasting and global solution such as effectively to resolve the African continent's external debt crisis. The measures contemplated in the New Agenda, which advocate cancellations and/or substantial reductions in both public and trade debt as well as the interest on it, should be taken immediately. In this context, the proposal to hold an international conference on African external debt, although longstanding, is just as relevant as ever, as it would be likely to promote a better overall understanding of the phenomenon of African external debt and to promote appropriate solutions.

To help African countries, whose external earnings continue to depend on a small number of basic commodities, and to revitalize their export sectors, resolute action should be taken to bring about a greater diversification of their economies as well as to establish concerted machinery promoting more remunerative prices and an orderly regulation of the evolution of these prices. The recommendations of the Secretary-General with regard to the establishment of a diversification fund for African commodities, as advocated by the New Agenda, should in this regard be followed up rapidly. It is important, therefore, for the General Assembly to take the decision at this session to create this modest and pragmatic machinery, which is designed to act as a catalyst in mobilizing resources from all possible sources. The Assembly would thus be registering its determination to see to it that the New Agenda embarks on the road to implementation.

The developed countries should feel it their duty to improve the access of African exports to their markets by agreeing to eliminate a number of tariff and other barriers to more equitable trade relations. This goal necessarily requires a rapid conclusion to the Uruguay Round negotiations, and we hope that these will pave the way for the establishment of an open and non-discriminatory international trade system and promote the effective integration of African countries into the world economy.

The international community should also adopt rapidly the necessary measures to encourage direct foreign investment in African countries and also to support the efforts of the African countries to create sufficiently encouraging legislation.

The New Agenda for the Development of Africa is a contract of solidarity between the international community and Africa. This New Agenda calls for sacrifices on the part of all. The United Nations and all the agencies in the system cannot remain outside the concerted effort to bring about true economic recovery in Africa. The establishment by the Secretary-General of a Panel of High-level Personalities on African development demonstrates the commitment of our Organization to the cause of the development of the continent and also its determination to harmonize all the energies of the specialized agencies within a coherent endeavour to implement the New Agenda.

The Economic Commission for Africa has in this regard an important role to play both in educating the international community as to the priority to be given to the needs of Africa and in the coordination of the activities of the relevant institutions that are involved in the work of development throughout the African continent. Greater interaction is also expected between the Economic Commission for Africa and the Organization of African Unity, particularly in terms of assistance for the methodical implementation of the Abuja Treaty.

With this in mind, it is important for the General Assembly to invest more of its authority in this vast project and for the programme budget it will examine shortly to distinguish, in terms of priority and resources, the many and varied activities called for by the need to make the efforts to implement the New Agenda for the Development of Africa more dynamic.

Mr. MONGBE (Benin) *(interpretation from French)*: The implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s is for us Africans one of the chief items on the agenda of this, the forty-eighth, session of the General Assembly, which you, Sir, have been presiding over with great competence and skill since work began on 21 September.

Before I share with you some thoughts my delegation has to offer in the context of this debate, I should like to say that we support the statements delivered by the representative of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, Ambassador Elaraby, of Egypt, and by the President of the Group of African States for the month of November, Ambassador Lamamra of Algeria. Finally, I would, like on behalf of my country, to convey our profound gratitude to Ambassador Jaramillo, of Colombia, who has just expressed from this rostrum the sincere and unqualified support of the Group of 77, this group of 130 countries, for the legitimate request of African States for better implementation of the New Agenda.

Last year, in the course of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the African delegations voiced their

disquiet and their concern at the lethargy that characterized the launching of the implementation of the New Agenda since its establishment under resolution 46/151 of 18 December 1991.

Just a few days after the suspension of the forty-seventh session, the Secretary-General presided over the first meeting of the Group of High-Level Personalities on the Development of Africa, which he convened and which was held in Geneva on 28 December 1992. That first meeting was followed by a second, with Rome as its venue, on 17 and 18 April 1993.

At these gatherings the focus was on the following issues: Africa's external debt; diversification of the African economies; regional and subregional economic integration in Africa; improvement in the coordination of activities of non-governmental organizations at the level of governments, and activities within the United Nations system for the development of Africa.

My delegation welcomes the fact that the Secretary-General did indeed heed the appeal made by the African delegations at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly in the course of the general debate by convening and directing in person the two Meetings of the Group of High-Level Personalities for the Development of Africa.

My delegation also appreciates the importance of the other four key issues addressed at these two meetings. However, we feel that the picture would have been more complete still had the matters of food security, human resources training and the strengthening of national capacities also been examined there.

We note with great concern that outside the holding of these two meetings and the publication of the New Agenda as a document, no other step was taken until this, the forty-eighth, session of the General Assembly.

The three documents submitted to us for analysis at this session - the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/334) on the preliminary consideration of the implementation of the New Agenda, the study on the need for and feasibility of the establishment of a diversification fund for Africa's commodities (A/48/335 and Add.1), and the special study on financial flows to Africa (A/48/336 and Corr.1) - were published so late that it was impossible to solicit the views and the observations of our capitals, which would have enhanced the contributions our African delegations are able to make to the implementation of the New Agenda.

My delegation would like at this point to offer some comments and suggestions.

We wish to lend our support to the concept of setting up a diversification fund for Africa's commodities within the African Development Bank in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, for an initial period of three to four years, and endowing it with an initial allotment of resources amounting to $50 million to $75 million, for the purpose of helping African countries work out diversification programmes and projects for their commodities.

Benin would also like to support the proposal concerning the creation within each African country of a national diversification council, whose functions could include the elaboration and evaluation of diversification projects, taking into account the structural and institutional situation as well as available infrastructure and human resources.

However, we must emphasize that the effectiveness and the success of such a commodity diversification fund will hinge on the progress made in solving existing problems in certain crucial areas, such as Africa's external debt, increasing official development assistance, providing fresh additional resources, increasing direct foreign investment, promoting small- and medium-scale industries and businesses, and the transfer and adaptation of technology for the processing of commodities, supported by the establishment or the strengthening of existing research and development structures guaranteeing in the long term the successful diversification of African economies.

Success in diversification also depends on the measures to be envisaged in political, geographical and structural terms to change the current patterns of trade in Africa which are impeding South-South trade cooperation in general and intra-African trade cooperation in particular.

The special study on the flow of finances to Africa shows the inadequacy of direct foreign investment in Africa in general, and in sub-Saharan Africa in particular, the weakness in the mobilization of national resources, both public and private, the low level of savings and the drop in official development aid.

The political and economic reforms undertaken by African States are not enough to bring about a lasting solution. By adopting General Assembly resolution 46/151 on 18 December 1991 the international community committed itself to supporting the efforts made by Africa to speed growth and to achieve lasting, sustainable development focused on people. This support should now translate into specific, visible and tangible actions, measures and achievements like those carried out in other hard-hit regions of our planet.

Financial resources in adequate amounts were to be provided to Africa so that its gross national product might reach an annual growth rate of 6 per cent, for which a net amount of $30 billion in official development assistance would have been required in 1992, along with a rise in the growth rate to an average of 4 per cent per annum, according to the New Agenda (General Assembly resolution 46/151, annex, part II, para. 29). Unfortunately, such resources still have not materialized even today, as 1993 is drawing to a close. This situation is oddly reminiscent of what happened to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, whose crushing failure - caused by the lack of financial resources and also by its faulty conception - prompted us to negotiate the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

Within the United Nations system, the Secretary-General's report (A/48/334) on the preliminary examination of the implementation of the New Agenda shows that no large-scale measures have been launched for some two years now. Indeed, the Bureau of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Africa and the least developed countries is continually suffering from a lack of financial and human resources needed to fulfil its task of following up on and effectively implementing the New Agenda, even though the General Assembly clearly declared that the development of Africa was one of the five United Nations priorities for the 1990s.

Faced with the alarming situation caused by the United Nations system in the implementation of the New Agenda, as a result of the markedly late launching of its implementation, my delegation wishes urgently to call on the Secretary-General to invite all the bodies, agencies, and levels of authority throughout the United Nations system to incorporate the priorities of the New Agenda into their respective mandates as soon as possible, and to allocate the resources required to implement these priorities in accordance with the concept of additionality, which is the underpinning of this Agenda, and keeping in mind the five United Nations priorities for the 1990s.

The incorporation of these priorities and the allocation of adequate resources by the United Nations system will make possible some progress, which can be built upon and improved both by the recommendations emerging from the high-level Economic and Social Council debate in 1995 to be devoted to implementation of the New Agenda and by the decisions and resolutions to be adopted in 1996, when the General Assembly will proceed to a mid-term review of the implementation of the New Agenda.

Beyond that, in the context of the implementation and follow-up work to be carried out by the United Nations system and by Africa, the Bureau of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries should in 1994 organize seminars and workshops on the priorities spelled out in the New Agenda, at the level of each of the five subregions within Africa. Implementing these priorities for the economic recovery and development of Africa will thus pass from a pious hope to the level of reality. These seminars and workshops should be organized in close concert with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the subregional economic communities: the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Central African Customs and Economic Union (CACEU), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the Preferential Trade Area of Eastern and Southern African States (PTA) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU).

We hardly wish to harbour illusions. The New Agenda will not attain the expected success if adequate resources are not mobilized, if the international community does not honour its commitment and if the United Nations system does not play its role correctly. At the same time, Africa must pursue its own political and economic reforms and ensure the effective functioning of the follow-up, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of the New Agenda.

The end of the cold war and the prospect of building a more effective and efficient United Nations in the realm of economic and social development gives us reason to hope that the New Agenda can achieve success. Africa has the right and the duty to enter the twenty-first century on an equal footing with the rest of the world and not lagging behind, as might be predicted on the basis of the current situation, which we all deplore and which together we must resolutely correct.

Mr. SEYDOU (Niger) *(interpretation from French)*: The consideration of agenda item 24, "United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s", gives my delegation a new opportunity to contribute to the work of the forty-eighth session.

My delegation wholeheartedly endorses the statement on this subject made on behalf of Africa by Ambassador Elaraby, representing the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity. It would also like to congratulate and thank the Ambassador of Colombia, who offered the support and contribution of the Group of 77 to the efforts of the international community.

However, I join previous speakers in expressing my concern and anxiety over the evolution of the

implementation of this new programme for Africa. It will be recalled that at the end of the application of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session adopted resolution 46/151 on the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

In paragraph 43 of part II of the annex, the resolution calls for a preliminary consideration of the implementation of the New Agenda during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. Two years after the adoption of this text and the new commitment made by the international community, we cannot help but note how slow implementation has been.

It is true that spectacular results could not have been achieved so quickly. Nevertheless, a few decisive initiatives would at least have assured us of the new interest of the world in the socio-economic difficulties which continue to afflict the African countries.

Unfortunately, the situation in Africa has not changed over the last two years. It is hardly necessary to remind the Assembly that the New Agenda was adopted because of the external debt crisis, the steady decline in commodity prices, the consequences of structural adjustment reforms, the deterioration of the environment, the reduction by more than 80 per cent of capital flows to Africa, and natural catastrophes.

In accordance with paragraph 3 of resolution 46/151, the African countries have adopted bold measures to improve the management of their economies. They have embarked upon a process of democratization, which is still under way in certain countries and which has been completed in others. The human dimension of development is being taken into account more than ever in all decisions taken by African leaders. Questions of environment, population, self-sufficiency in food, development of human resources and improvement of the living conditions of the most vulnerable sectors of society are at the very heart of the priorities adopted by African Governments.

It still remains, however, for the international community to support Africa's efforts to accelerate growth and ensure development which is focused on the human being, in a lasting and sustained fashion. The African countries would have been much encouraged by the assistance of the international community in the implementation of three priority areas defined by the Secretary-General following the high-level meeting in Geneva last December: external debt, regional and subregional integration and diversification of the economies of African countries.

Of course, there have been some positive actions which we cannot overlook. Thus we welcome the international conferences and high-level meetings organized by the United Nations in an attempt to refocus the attention of the international community on Africa. We welcome the Conference on the development of Africa organized by the Japanese Government on 5 and 6 October last. This Conference was an opportunity for Japan and the international community to undertake to improve the rate of official development assistance. The forum to be organized in Indonesia in 1994, which will bring together representatives of African countries and foreign investors, again upon the initiative of the Japanese Government, is a further aspect of this welcome progress. We also welcome the feasibility study report on a diversification fund for Africa's commodities which has just been presented to the General Assembly.

Niger also welcomes all the actions the Secretary-General has taken through the Bureau of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries to keep Africa at the centre of United Nations concerns throughout the Decade.

But we consider that much remains to be done: we are far from achieving the goals of the New Agenda for Africa. We firmly believe that without an integrated approach to resolve Africa's multisectoral problems, the region will continue to encounter serious obstacles to the achievement of its objectives.

The measures set out in the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s are more relevant than ever before. Niger appeals to the international community to begin implementing its own decisions. Niger calls on the developed countries to devote a portion of the resources freed by the reduction of military expenditures to the growth and socio-economic development of the African countries. The international financial institutions too can contribute to these efforts by increasing their financial support for the African countries on favourable terms.

We would like to see greater involvement by non-governmental organizations, and the organization of seminars in Africa and elsewhere with a view to increasing public awareness. In that connection we appeal to the Secretary-General to enable the Bureau of the Coordinator to take action to educate the peoples of Africa and of the developed world on the need to implement the New Agenda for Africa.

Let me conclude, Mr. President, by congratulating you on the remarkable skill, ability and intelligence with which you are guiding the work of the General Assembly.

Mr. CHEN Jian (China) *(interpretation from Chinese)*: Both the report of the Secretary-General and the speeches delivered by the representatives of many African countries today, and in particular the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China by the representative of Colombia, current Chairman of that Group, have shown clearly that in the past two years the countries and peoples of Africa have made tremendous efforts in implementing General Assembly resolution 46/151. They have carried out adjustments and reforms in line with their national conditions, and have shown a vigorous spirit of seizing the opportunity for development.

Regrettably, as is pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report, most African countries remain in a perilous situation marked by rising indebtedness, rapid population growth, stagnant exports, a long-term fall in *per capita* income and a sharp deterioration in the nutritional situation. The implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s is still faced with numerous challenges. One of these is diversification of export commodities, aimed at strengthening food security, improving the sustainability of production, increasing export earnings and promoting development.

The report has also helped us see that in the course of implementing the New Agenda there has been a sharper contrast between the unremitting efforts of the African countries and the lack of powerful support from the international community. This is indicated particularly by the fact that the request for stabilizing the prices of export products in African countries has yet to be met; the trade protectionism practised by the developed countries is still on the rise; financial flows to Africa have decreased; and the reduction and exemption of the debts of African countries are far below the expected level.

The developed countries' failure to fulfil their obligations and commitments and the increasingly deteriorating world economic environment have undermined the endeavours of the African countries and offset the benefits produced by the New Agenda. That situation must be changed. Development in Africa must be achieved through the concerted efforts and sincere cooperation of the African people and the international community. It needs both a strong driving force within the African countries and a powerful impetus from outside. Economic restoration and growth in Africa not only has a direct bearing on long-term stability in African countries, but also affects the stable and healthy development of the entire world economy.

In order further to implement the New Agenda, we believe, first, that the international community, and especially the developed countries, should attach more importance to the New Agenda, and that their commitments to the implementation of the New Agenda should be transformed from words into practice. In particular, they should mobilize adequate external resources and fulfil their obligations in such fields as commodity, trade and debt.

Secondly, we believe that the constructive recommendations in the Secretary-General's report in favour of the African countries' efforts to implement the New Agenda, including the recommendation to set up a diversification facility for African commodities within the African Development Bank, should receive active support and an active response.

Thirdly, we believe that, while it is true that the implementation of the New Agenda is not going to be plain sailing and cost-free, backward economies and weak foundation have made the African countries fairly vulnerable with respect to withstanding the risks and pressures resulting from rapid change. As we support the African countries in achieving the objectives of the New Agenda, we must fully understand their different national conditions, respect their choices of development strategies and policies, avoid or reduce as much as possible the turbulence and negative effects that might be produced by certain measures, reduce the social costs of reforms and achieve the best comprehensive economic and social returns.

Fourthly, we believe that the United Nations system should play a positive role in implementing the New Agenda; the relevant United Nations organizations and specialized agencies should formulate and implement projects related to the New Agenda, inject adequate financial resources, provide strong support to regional and subregional economic and technical cooperation in Africa, supervise more closely the implementation of the New Agenda and improve the quality of evaluation.

The Government and the people of China attach great importance to economic development and social progress in African countries. Strengthening unity and cooperation with third-world countries, including African countries, is the cornerstone of China's foreign policy. We will, as always, continue to strengthen exchanges and various forms of cooperation with African countries in the economic, trade and technical fields, and contribute, to the

best of our ability, to the achievement of the objectives of the New Agenda.

Mr. MARUYAMA (Japan): First of all, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the reports he has prepared on this very important issue. Among the extensive and valuable information they present is background on the adoption of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, descriptions of the past and current political, economic, and social situation of African countries, and an assessment of the progress of efforts to implement the New Agenda at the national, regional, and international levels, as well as at the United Nations.

My delegation has nothing to add to this information, and I should therefore like to limit my remarks to the subject of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development. The Conference was hosted by the Japanese Government, with the United Nations and the Global Coalition for Africa as co-organizers. It concluded successfully with the adoption of the Tokyo Declaration on African Development, entitled "Towards the 21st Century". Copies of the Declaration, which have already been provided to the Second Committee, may be obtained from the Japanese Mission.

The Conference was attended by some 400 participants from 48 African countries, 13 major donor countries and 10 international organizations. In addition, more than 30 countries and international organizations were present as observers. Some African countries were represented by Heads of State, and many countries were represented at the ministerial level. On behalf of my Government, I should like to take this opportunity to reiterate my deepest gratitude to all of them for their contributions to the success of the Conference.

The Declaration, which contains sections on political and economic reforms, economic development through activities of the private sector, regional cooperation and integration, emergency relief and development, Asian experience and African development, international cooperation and follow-up, fully reflects the discussions that took place in the course of the two-day gathering. Because of time constraints, I shall not attempt to summarize them here. However, there are three points I should like to make.

First, the discussions at the Conference were undertaken in a very constructive manner and in a spirit of partnership. At the opening session, His Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire, President of the Republic of Botswana and Co-Chairman of the Global Coalition for Africa, noted that African countries were fully conscious of their responsibility for formulating and implementing political and economic reform programmes that would put them on the path of sustained and equitable growth, and he called on development partners to support these reform efforts on the basis of a new and strengthened partnership. Similar views were expressed by a number of participants from African countries and their partners. This spirit of partnership is emphasized throughout the Tokyo Declaration, including in the last sentence of the preamble, which states,

> "We, therefore, solemnly adopt the present Declaration, in the firm belief that it will serve to strengthen an emerging new partnership for sustainable development of Africa based on self-reliance of African countries and the support of Africa's development partners."

Secondly, I should like to comment on the new dimension the Conference gave the subject of African development by discussing it in conjunction with Asian experience. Under this agenda item, case studies of Indonesia and Thailand were presented by two prominent guest speakers from those countries, and opinions and analyses were offered by other participants. Although it was noted at the Conference that no model of development can simply be transferred from one region to another, it was acknowledged that some of the Asian experience is relevant to African development, such as the value of appropriate long-term development strategies, a functional government administration and the strong commitment of both a country's leadership and its people to the achievement of economic prosperity. Opportunities for South-South cooperation between Asia and Africa are growing, and I should like to note that many countries participating in the Conference showed an interest in exploring this area.

Mr. Martini Herrera (Guatemala), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Lastly, I should like to refer to the Japanese Government's statements delivered at the Conference by Prime Minister Hosokawa and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hata, which may be summarized as follows:

First, Japan will endeavour to contribute to enhancing political processes in Africa, extending assistance to democratization efforts, both bilaterally and through participation in the international efforts undertaken by the United Nations and other organizations.

Secondly, Japan will continue actively to assist economic reform in Africa. It will, for example, extend

non-project-type grant assistance totaling $650 million to $700 million over the three Japanese fiscal years from 1993 to 1995, mainly to those African countries that are pursuing such reform programmes. We also strongly urge continuation of the Special Programme of Assistance for Africa (SPA) and a new facility to succeed the present Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF).

Thirdly, Japan will actively assist in human-resources development. We are starting an African Youth Invitation Programme so that young individuals may come from Africa to Japan, and we are attempting to hold an Asia-Africa seminar next year, in cooperation with other interested countries and organizations.

Fourthly, Japan will pay further attention to environmental problems in Africa, in line with its earlier commitment to expand substantially its global environment-related official development assistance to between $7 billion and $7.7 billion over the next five years. It has also formulated a project to develop underground water resources and water supplies in various parts of sub-Saharan Africa and will provide grant aid of $250 million to $300 million for this purpose over the next three years.

Finally, Japan's official development assistance will emphasize effectiveness and efficiency and take into account each country's stage of economic development, in accordance with the principles set forth last year in Japan's official-development-assistance charter. To this end, we intend to strengthen policy dialogue with African countries and send more frequent economic cooperation missions to the region.

In order to help African countries achieve sustainable development, it is necessary to take a comprehensive approach that addresses issues including trade, investment, debt, environment, and population. The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s sets forth the principles that must guide us in formulating such an approach. I believe that the Tokyo International Conference on African Development made a major contribution to the successful implementation of the New Agenda, and the Japanese Government will cooperate fully with other countries and organizations, especially the United Nations and the Global Coalition for Africa, in undertaking follow-up activities.

My delegation would like to conclude its statement by expressing Japan's firm commitment to continuing and strengthening its partnership with African countries as they strive to achieve sustainable development and, by so doing, enter a new era of prosperity and security.

Mr. NOTERDAEME (Belgium) *(interpretation from French)*: I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States.

I wish first of all to thank the Secretary-General for the various reports which he has submitted to the General Assembly and which form the basis for our debate today. We see in this confirmation of the Secretary-General's personal interest in Africa's economic problems.

We would also like to thank the Special Coordinator for Africa, Mr. Ould Abdallah, for his contribution to our work.

Year after year we are presented with the picture of an Africa in crisis. Over the past 10 years we have seen spectacular growth in a whole group of developing countries in other parts of the world. For Africa, on the other hand, the talk is of a lost decade. We must not give way to fatalism, however, but must look for the true causes of the problems. The recent Tokyo Conference enabled us to make progress in that quest.

But we should not generalize too much. There have, it is true, been some positive events on the continent. Since the end of the 1980s we have seen in Africa a tremendous movement of social, political and economic reform which can lay the foundations for societies that are more open and more capable of managing their own destinies. We must pay a tribute to the African peoples and politicians that have courageously embarked upon the path of democracy.

However, despite a better international political context and substantial international assistance, the African economies have not got off the mark. We must try to find the reasons for that failure. When we bring the question down to its more concrete dimensions, we can see a number of direct causes.

First, in Africa the very concept of development has been for too long a notion imposed from above, unconnected with the actual potential of these societies. Their lack of commitment explains the abandonment of the agricultural sector, the low level of savings, the flight of capital and the brain drain.

Secondly, the demographic factor has always prevented any improvement in living standards. At whatever cost, this spiral in which all economic growth is nullified by population growth must be halted.

Thirdly, Africa is perhaps the continent where the human potential for development has been the most underestimated. There has been a tragic waste of life and

of a spirit of initiative. Donor countries and African countries have often taken the wrong road together by promoting development based on major infrastructures rather than taking as their point of departure the fundamental elements - education, health, the vital role of women and the encouragement of the societies' human potential.

At the same time, we must concede that the world economic situation has not been favourable to the recovery of African economies. This remark applies to the level of commodity prices, international interest rates and the movement of private investment. We have no decisive control over all these factors, but we are still aware of the need to create a better international economic climate to accompany the efforts of the African countries, particularly in respect of the liberalization of trade and access to markets.

It is with this in mind that we should evaluate the chances of success for the New Agenda for the Development of Africa. In many respects the Agenda is an ambitious document. This applies in particular to the figures for economic growth and transfers of resources. The experience of previous programmes, in particular the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, has taught us that operational follow-up is as important as the selection of targets.

International assistance, if it is to contribute effectively to growth, must be accompanied by an effort to improve public financing. Only in that way will the international financial community and private investors find their way back to Africa. However, the international community has not abandoned Africa to its fate. Indeed, both in absolute and in per capita terms, more international aid went to Africa during the 1980s than to other continents.

As to the European Community and its member States, I wish to reaffirm here our traditional links of solidarity with Africa. We cannot agree that indifference towards Africa prevails. Indeed, Africa remains the largest beneficiary of the aid which the Community and its member States extend through the Lomé Conventions. A fund of about 100 million ECUs was set up by the Community last May. In addition to this Community aid there has been substantial bilateral assistance from individual member States of the Community. Thanks to these actions at various levels, the Community and its member States are the primary donors to and the primary trading partners of the African continent.

Among the specific problems facing African countries we would like to highlight two in particular: debt and diversification.

As to external debt, we recognize the urgency of taking appropriate steps within the framework of the international strategy, while placing debt-servicing within the broader context of capital flows. The member States of the Community have continued, in the Paris Club, to take measures to help the poorest countries which are so deeply in debt, and we urge the other creditors to do so.

The Community and its member States are also cognizant of the problem of the indebtedness of certain African countries with income at the intermediate echelon of the lower level. They hope that these can be given, on a case-by-case basis, more favourable treatment, particularly by the Paris Club. However, we stress that the debt problems cannot be solved solely by international action. The countries themselves bear the responsibility for adopting sound policies within the framework of structural adjustment.

Economic diversification is a priority, since the vulnerability of African economies is often a direct consequence of the lack of diversity. This applies particularly to countries which are heavily dependent upon commodity exports. These exports must find outlets but, at the same time, an economic environment more favourable to diversification must be created. While we recognize this problem, we must see it in the broader framework of the promotion of alternative investments and the stabilization of export earnings. Above all, we must avoid the unrealistic approaches of the past. The possibilities that exist in the multilateral system to promote diversification should be exploited to the utmost, avoiding the creation of new structures which would result in duplication.

We are speaking here of Africa as a whole, but we should not overlook the fact that this vast continent does not lend itself to stereotypes. Our efforts must be sufficiently flexible for regional and even subregional differences to be taken into account. The possibilities of regional and subregional cooperation in Africa are not being sufficiently exploited. In the implementation of the New Agenda a revitalized economic commission for Africa could play a primary role. We urge the establishment of an African economic community in accordance with the Abuja Treaty, and we will most willingly share with our African partners the experience accumulated in the course of the process of economic integration within the European Community.

Subregional cooperation is irreplaceable in a number of economic sectors. Indeed, the concept of sustainable development has directed attention to problems which, by their very nature, transcend borders and require common approaches. Drought and desertification, the focus of the Rio follow-up debate, are merely the most striking examples. We reaffirm the importance to be given Africa in drawing up an international convention on the subject.

African development cannot be isolated from the ups and downs of the world economy. However, if we can succeed in creating healthy and efficient national economies in the African countries they will find a way of integrating themselves into the global economy.

The European Community and its member States wholeheartedly subscribe to the notion of shared responsibility and partnership, as defined by the eighth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. We are convinced that the cycle of poverty can be broken and that, thanks to national and international efforts, Africa will come to take its proper place in our world.

Mr. KARUKUBIRO KAMUNANWIRE (Uganda): I should like at the outset to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for the excellent reports he has presented on this agenda item, including that on the need for and feasibility of the establishment of a diversification fund for Africa's commodities and that on financial and resource flows to Africa, specifically requested in the context of the implementation of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. These two areas are deemed critical and necessary for the successful implementation of the New Agenda. We are grateful for the concrete proposals contained in the two reports.

The African countries cannot for ever continue to rely on one or two export commodities for their export earnings. There is a need for them to strive to diversify their primary commodities and to add value through increased processing. Only in that way can they expect to achieve stability and an increase in their export earnings.

We support the suggestion in document A/48/335 that a diversification fund be established within the framework of the African Development Bank. The main purpose of that fund, it has been made very clear, is to assist in the preparation of commodity diversification projects. To do that, the report recommends the formation in Africa of national diversification councils, which would draw up such diversification projects in close cooperation with the fund. This arrangement should make it possible to address anomalies that might arise in project preparations. This is an initiative that should be viewed as giving new impetus to the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

We should also support the suggestion that the fund be established on the basis of voluntary contributions and that it make grant allocations for pre-investment activities. To ensure financing for such a fund the international community and multilateral financing institutions must make generous contributions to meet the targets set for its establishment.

The question of adequate financial and resource flows is particularly crucial at this stage of the political and economic transformation in which many of the countries of Africa are now seriously engaged.

Our developed partners quite often suggest domestic savings as a source of needed financial resources. It should, however, be noted that only improved terms of trade could enhance Africa's capacity for domestic savings. As has been indicated, a quick look at the ridiculous prices African commodities have been fetching in the international markets over the years shows us why this has not been possible. Coffee prices, for example, have fallen from a high of over $3 in 1978 to as low as 40 cents, or even less, in 1992. Thus countries like Uganda, which in 1978 earned more than $400 million in coffee exports alone, are now earning less than $100 million for export volumes that have more than doubled. The same story can be told of cocoa, tea, timber and a number of Africa's other agricultural and mineral products.

The point must therefore be made that for most African countries the ability to achieve savings is dependent upon the performance of their export sector. The drop in prices of major primary commodities results in loss of revenue, leading to a serious decline in income as the taxable base is eroded.

In the absence of such capacity to save, external support is imperative. Our demand, therefore, should be to obtain fair remuneration for our commodities and unimpeded access to outside markets for our products.

There is a need now, more than ever before, to put greater emphasis on commercial loans to countries of the region than on the continued resort to existing forms of external financing. This is because most of the resources being made available through official development assistance have tended to be inadequate; they do not cater for long-term transformation. Africa needs resources that are large enough and can be used to address the inadequate physical, institutional and social infrastructures and the problems of a weak productive base. Long-term lending should be possible for those countries that are embarking

on fundamental economic restructuring and that can demonstrate returns on investment. That is possible if the projects financed are viable.

The change in the form, mode and volume of external financing is important, because there is little to show for all the official development assistance that has been allocated to the continent over the years. The reasons for this are not far to seek. The bulk of the bilateral and multilateral aid flow to Africa so far has gone to finance technical assistance and import support, and very little, if any, has gone to productive capital. That is why there is now a need to focus on physical, institutional and social infrastructures.

In many cases the failure of development projects is erroneously thought to be associated with the domestic policies of the recipient Governments. What is often overlooked, however, is that many of the development plans and their failed projects, which are often blamed on the policies of the recipient developing countries, were in fact designed, put in place and executed on the advice and with the close involvement of the donor countries and multilateral financing institutions.

A closer study of the background of these plans and projects would reveal that, for most of them, the consultants, contractors or those charged with implementing them were selected and approved by the donors and financing institutions themselves. Because of low capacity in project design and execution in many African countries, our countries had little alternative but to rely on them for advice. Regrettably, many of these projects turned out to be too ill-designed or poorly executed to achieve the desired results. This was due to the fact that outside advisers and support personnel failed to appreciate the local conditions in recipient countries and the effect of those conditions on projects. And yet their accountability in this regard has never been brought to the fore - so far.

The atmosphere prevailing in international relations appears to be more propitious now than ever before. Many African countries have taken the necessary hard decisions and have put in place policies and programmes for adjustment, sustainable development and transformation. Governance and accountability, for example, have become accepted practice without undue external pressure. The time, therefore, has now come to show what money is being spent, where, for what purpose and to whose benefit, and to show the effectiveness of these expenditures in terms of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

Any strategy for financial flows to Africa that does not address the debt problem will be self-defeating. The present mechanism and format for handling the problem need to be substantially reviewed in order to provide both short- and long-term relief to the beneficiaries. We must continue to press for cancellation for severely indebted low-income countries. The essential elements of any initiative should include cancellation or a substantial reduction in the debt stock.

Debt owed to multilateral creditors should not for ever remain sacrosanct and thus exempt from the kind of flexible treatment being offered through various menus of options, such as cancellation, reduction, rescheduling, conversion, and so forth. By their actions, the multilateral financial institutions, rather than subtracting from the debt burden of incapacitated indebted low-income countries, are adding to it. Scarce concessional resources are now being used to service these debts instead of applying them to development purposes. The net effect of this is simply to convert a payment crisis into a chronic problem the end of which does not seem to be in sight.

The multilateral financial institutions are urged to consider canceling, reducing or rescheduling the debts owed them by the severely indebted countries of Africa, in order to provide much-needed relief at this time of their socio-economic transformation. Furthermore, the commitment by the international community in the context of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s to give full and tangible support to the African effort has yet to materialize. During the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, the international community committed itself to assisting Africa to engineer the process of recovery during the period 1986 to 1990. The international community was expected to transfer $9 billion annually for that purpose, over and above official development assistance. It is a sad commentary that very little ever happened during that period. Thirty billion dollars in net official development assistance was set for 1992 for the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, and it was agreed that subsequent official development assistance would grow in real terms at the rate of 4 per cent annually. We have yet to see the commitment of the international community materialize in this regard.

The point must be made that Africa needs special temporary measures. African countries are not in a position to compete effectively in the financial markets of a world that has become more competitive. The weakness of the industrial base and social and political problems have made Africa less competitive. The support of the international community is therefore critical in this regard.

Let me conclude by taking this opportunity to thank, most sincerely, the Government of Japan for the recent important and significant initiative which it undertook in convening the successful Tokyo International Conference on African Development. The Global Coalition for Africa and the office of the United Nations Coordinator for Africa and the least-developed countries are also to be commended for their support and their efforts in organizing that Conference. The Conference succeeded in focusing international attention on Africa. The African participants reiterated their commitment to self-help and regional integration, and expressed the hope that the international community would, in turn, focus its attention on support for African endeavors. As with most conferences of this nature, the most important element remains that of follow-up action to make good on the commitments that were entered into. It is our earnest hope that all concerned will come to live by these commitments.

Mr. SAMASSEKOU (Mali) *(interpretation from French)*: My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his pertinent reports on the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and for the various actions he has undertaken towards confronting the problems of the continent and making the international community more aware of the need to help solve them.

Before commenting on the item before the Assembly, my delegation wants to state that it fully endorses the views expressed by the representatives of Egypt and Algeria, who spoke on behalf of the current President of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the current Chairman of the African Group at the United Nations. We also thank the representative of Colombia, current Chairman of the Group of 77, for the Group's support in the search for a solution to Africa's concerns.

The General Assembly's adoption in 1991 of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s raised great hopes both among the Governments and the peoples of Africa.

Based on the principle of shared responsibility and real partnership between Africa and the international community, the New Agenda differs from the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 in that it hinges on precisely defined objectives to be attained during the 1990s. These include, among others, an average annual growth rate of gross domestic product in Africa of at least 6 per cent, and a minimum of $30 billion in net official development assistance in 1992, a sum that is to grow at an average rate of 4 per cent per annum.

In addition to these goals, the New Agenda clearly defines the respective responsibilities of Africa, the international community and the United Nations system. In that respect, it asks the African countries to implement the economic reforms necessary for sustainable growth and development; it asks the international community to seek a solution to the debt problem, supply additional resources and support efforts towards diversification and economic integration; and it asks the United Nations system to play a major role in carrying out specific programmes compatible with the goals of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa.

Despite the specific nature of the New Agenda's goals, the level of achievement remains below the minimum expected by Africa. Prospects for an economic rebound in Africa seem less and less promising, due to the excessive burden of external debt, the fall in commodity prices and the decline of financial flows. During the New Agenda's implementation period, African growth rates have so far ranged from 1 per cent to 3.8 per cent, depending on the subregion. The various rates remain well below the goal of 6 per cent set by the New Agenda for the Development of Africa. As to resource flows, generally speaking the amount of financial assistance given to Africa has declined. The available funds are below the annual volume foreseen within the New Agenda. In connection with commodities, the Secretary-General notes in document A/48/334 that exports from sub-Saharan Africa have fallen by 15 per cent in the 1990s and that the value of these exports is barely higher than it was in 1990.

Within the framework of the burning question of commodities, my delegation believes that special attention should be given to the conclusions and recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/335) entitled "Need for and feasibility of the establishment of a diversification fund for Africa's commodities". My delegation welcomes the recommendation to establish a diversification fund for Africa's commodities and national diversification councils. While urging African countries to establish these councils as quickly as possible, we urgently appeal to the international community that it implement the recommendation that the necessary resources be made available for this fund. It is desirable for the fund to become operational by December 1993.

Within the framework of international solidarity and the ties of cooperation that link Africa to the rest of the world, particular attention should be given to this continent because of the specificity and gravity of its problems. Indeed, Africa in its development efforts remains the most handicapped of any region. It still has the lowest standard of living in the world, and extreme poverty continues to grow there. Africa devotes a third of its export earnings to

servicing a debt that is the heaviest per capita in the world and the total volume of which amounted to $225 billion in 1992. Currently, its share in international trade is tiny, amounting to less than 2 per cent of world merchandise exchange.

The many programmes and plans for Africa drawn up on the national, subregional, regional and international levels should be tangibly put into practice. The New Agenda for the Development of Africa makes it possible to gauge progress made towards African development in each of the areas I have addressed.

That is why my delegation appeals to all the members of the international community effectively to implement the commitments they have undertaken in order to realize the New Agenda for the Development of Africa. I take this opportunity to extend my delegation's congratulations and thanks to the Japanese Government, which has recently hosted an International Conference on African Development. The effective implementation of the Declaration made at that Conference deserves the special attention of all participants.

More than ever, the African countries need the cooperation of the rest of the international community. It is vital that we initiate a process of true partnership. We believe that Africa, like other regions of the world, is ready to receive investments. It would be useful to establish relations of mutual trust with investors. In that regard, we are aware that a share of responsibility falls on the recipient countries. In most of our countries, the conditions for guaranteeing investments have been met. Considerable efforts have been exerted towards that end. But we also ask the source countries for these potential investments to take measures to encourage investment and to guarantee them with commitments to the recipient countries if need be.

With the implementation in several countries of bold programmes of economic reform and structural adjustment, along with the establishment of democracy, Africa has reached a decisive stage in its history. The international community will have to help pursue the process under way.

Mr. BILOA TANG (Cameroon) *(interpretation from French)*: Beyond what the representatives of Algeria, Egypt and Colombia have already said on behalf of the Organization of African Unity and the Group of 77, I should like at the outset to express our appreciation and gratitude to the Secretary-General for the steps he has taken to implement the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. These steps include in particular the establishment of a Panel of High-level Personalities on the development of Africa and the naming of a Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries.

I should also like to express our satisfaction with the Secretary-General's reports on the implementation of the New Agenda, the study on the feasibility of establishing a diversification fund for African commodities, and resource flows for African development.

In the 1960s, following accession to independence by African countries, voices were raised against the French agronomist René Dumont, who had dared to write in a henceforth notorious work that Black Africa had started off on the wrong foot.

Three decades later, Africa still gives the impression not only of having started out on the wrong track but of not having started at all, as a result of the succession and concatenation of unfortunate events that have made it impossible for it to achieve economic lift-off. This is what Mr. Ferdinand Leopold Oyono, Minister of Foreign Relations and Head of the Cameroonian delegation, had in mind in his statement on 8 October last to the Assembly when he described the situation as follows:

> "A victim of flagrant injustices that constitute grave violations of human dignity, Africa, more than any other developing region, has the characteristics of a continent adrift. It is toiling under an intolerable burden of debt in a situation exacerbated by an overall trend towards disinvestment, a decline in official development assistance and a steady deterioration in the terms of trade as a result of the continuing fall in commodity prices." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Plenary Meetings, 22nd meeting, p. 9)*

As if that were not enough, environmental degradation, natural disasters, endemic diseases, famine, illiteracy and galloping population growth have made Africa a continent where life is not pleasant. Faced with this situation, which is neither more nor less than disastrous, in June 1986 the international community decided to seek ways and means of saving Africa, through the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990.

Courageous and even bold measures were recommended and adopted, but, as ever where Africa is concerned, there was agreement on the diagnosis and the therapy but there was no follow-up action. So, as far as Africa's critical economic situation is concerned, one can understand why one hears talk of a lost decade.

Africa and the international community, faced with this failure - and in an unprecedented upsurge of solidarity - once again adopted what was described as a world partnership for African development. Firm and specific commitments were made by both sides.

Africa undertook far-reaching and difficult reforms designed to speed up the process of democratization, promote human rights and ensure economic, social and cultural development in an atmosphere of transparency and with the active participation of all positive forces - and, while so doing, stressing the creation of attractive conditions for investment, developing the potential of our human resources, applying structural adjustment programmes and pursuing and consolidating economic integration through subregional, regional and international cooperation.

For its part, the international community undertook to support these efforts, specifically by seeking a lasting solution to the debt problem, providing substantial additional financial resources and supporting economic diversification, to name but a few. However, while Africa has been resolutely striving to honour its commitments under the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, at the cost of enormous sacrifices, the international community's enthusiasm, on the other hand, appears to have waned. This is why we are afraid that we will see the New Agenda suffer the same sad fate that befell the Programme of Action.

My delegation therefore joins all those others that have already stressed the urgent need for there to be an effective and rapid implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

With this in mind, my delegation also attaches great importance to the role of the Bureau of the Special Coordinator, and would wish for suitable steps to be taken to strengthen its ability to intervene. In the same vein, we welcome and support the proposal to establish a diversification fund for Africa's products under the auspices and with the support of the African Development Bank.

Cameroon, which already possesses diversification structures, notes with keen interest the proposal to establish national diversification committees, as spelt out in the report of the Secretary-General.

Whether the issue is one of establishing these new structures or of economic recovery, Africa needs new, additional financial resources: Africa is cruelly short of them. Of course Africa needs a diversification fund; but it also, and most of all, needs funds to finance its development in general. In this connection, suffice it to mention my delegation's assessment of the Tokyo Conference.

We note that substantial spontaneous and generous efforts have been undertaken to the benefit of the so-called "countries in transition", and, even more recently, to the benefit of recovery and reconstruction in the Middle East. Could not Africa too, for its development, be a beneficiary of the same spontaneity and generosity, which, in the final analysis, are the tangible expression of real political will?

It is this political will we call for.

Mr. OUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso) *(interpretation from French)*: Most of the speakers before me this morning have put forward essentially the same points of view held by the delegation of Burkina Faso. I shall therefore confine myself to making just a few comments.

In speaking today on the item on the agenda, we are bitterly reminded of the failure of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. As the representative of Burkina Faso said during the general debate at the forty-seventh session,

> "The rewards of the tireless efforts of the African countries have not been commensurate with the sacrifices we have made. The promises of the North remain promises, just as the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development has not been truly implemented, except by Africans themselves. A new page has been turned with the new programme for the 1990s, but that page remains blank." *(A/47/PV.21, p. 88)*

Even today, two years after the adoption of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa, we cannot fail to note that little progress has been made in implementing it.

While we can welcome the establishment of the Panel of High- level Personalities on African Development and the fact that it has held two meetings under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General of our Organization, we can also wonder what the content and the results of those meetings have been. Indeed, it seems that the only information about the meetings that we have had made available so far has been in the press releases covering the Secretary-General's statements about them.

On the institutional level, the New Agenda falls within the province of the Bureau of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries; the resources

and the capability of the Bureau should, in our view, be strengthened.

However, we do have some grounds for satisfaction and encouragement following the issuance of report A/48/335 on the need for and feasibility of the establishment of a diversification fund for Africa's commodities. In the report, the Secretary-General puts forward valuable arguments in favour of diversification, together with specific and balanced proposals.

A diversification fund for Africa's commodities is an urgent, imperative necessity, because one of Africa's major economic difficulties is the fact that it is dependent on a few export products that are constantly declining in price. My delegation therefore supports the establishment of a diversification fund. We hope that all the parties concerned and interested in African development will also support it.

Alongside the establishment of the fund, other accompanying measures will have to follow. Thus, diversification should cover products that will find a market in Africa and internationally; African products ought to have better access to the world market - and here we believe that the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade negotiations must be concluded with the interests of all the categories of developing countries taken into account equally - and there must also be a price stabilization system for our export products. If these points are not taken into account in the diversification process, the efforts made towards that end are likely to be insignificant and unfruitful.

The success of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa depends also on other key areas; these are industrialization, transport and communications and the settlement of the foreign debt question. The resolutions on the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa and the Second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa must therefore be put rapidly into effect. It is also a matter of urgency for us to see results from the promise that an international conference on foreign debt can be held, as provided for in paragraph 28 of the New Agenda for African Development in the 1990s.

In conclusion, and so that what I have just said should be something more than a simple wish list, we should like here to express our conviction that the success of the New Agenda for Africa cannot be ensured unless it is followed up with specific actions. The provisions of the agreement are precise and clear, and all that is needed is for each of the parties to put them into full effect. Africa, for its part, is already working on them.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at its eighth session and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development have proclaimed a new era of cooperation and partnership. The success or failure of the United Nations New Agenda for African Development in the 1990s will show whether we are capable of honouring our solemn commitments. Also, we believe that, in this regard, our word is our bond. Our work lies before us, and it is our actions that will speak.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.